

### ***Faith, vision and wisdom. The beginnings of Christ Church.***

The years leading up to the Great War, which started in 1914, were boom years for Calgary. The city had grown from 11,967 in 1906 to 60,502 in 1911. Elbow Park had been annexed by the city in **1906** and Freddie Lowes was soon selling lots. The Diocese Of Calgary had been formed in **1888**, and Cyprian Pinkham, the first bishop, was still in office. The nearest Anglican church was St Stephens, at 1121 14th Avenue SW, but St Marks would be built in 1914. .

Formal establishment of the church.

In **1911**, 40 families had the ***faith and vision*** to petition the bishop to erect a church in Elbow Park, on land donated by Fred Lowes in 1910. On **August 8th 1912**, Bishop Pinkham established the new parish and named Canon Hogbin as interim rector. That was the year of the first Calgary Stampede. The deed sets out the extent of the parish, which included Elbow Park, Glencoe, Rosevale, Rideau Park, Elboya and Britannia and was deposited with the synod Office.

Church get its name and officers elected.

On **August 15th**, an inaugural congregational meeting was held at "Lowestoft", the home of Mr and Mrs Lowes, which was beside the Elbow River at 30<sup>th</sup> Ave, with Canon Hogbin in the chair. Mr WP Hibbert was appointed Rector's Warden by Canon Hogbin. Major AG Wolley Dodd was voted People's Warden. In addition, eight vestry members were elected. Lay delegates to synod were elected later, in May. It was decided to call the new parish "Christ Church".

Wardens and vestry.

Monthly meetings followed, the first nine at "Lowestoft", then at parishioners' homes until after May'13 when they took place at the church except during construction of second stage of the basement church, when they were mainly held at the Rectory.

Annual parish meetings began in January'14, with appointment of Rector's warden, election of People's Warden, vestry and synod delegates. Annual Financial statements and reports from parish organizations were presented from that date.

First Rector.

The first vestry meeting on August 29<sup>th</sup>, asked the bishop to appoint Rev Charles Horne as the first rector. He took up his appointment on Dec 1<sup>st</sup>, with a minimum salary of \$100 per month.

Basement church.

The first vestry meeting on **August 29th 1912** appointed the firm of Laing and Major as Architects for the new church. On **Sept 10th**, a conceptual drawing of the proposed church was presented by the architects, which would cost about \$80,000. It was decided, in spite of the boom times to start small, on a phased creation of a less ambitious church, one then estimated to eventually cost \$40,000 in current dollar value, which could later be extended. The first phase would be the Eastern 1/3 of the church basement, to the level of the chancel arch of the future church. This was drawn up by the architects and put out to tender. On **Oct 3rd** tenders

were received and the job of constructing the building was awarded to The Swanstrom Co for \$7193, with E.M Robinson of Elbow Park to do the electrical wiring and make the Altar.

1<sup>st</sup> building phase.

It was built in the fall of 1912, substantially completed by Christmas at a cost of \$7,728. and had a capacity of 160 people, but not considered comfortable enough until the new year, when on January 5th 1913, the first service was on held, before a congregation of 40-50 people. There was initially no heat, but someone donated a wood and coal stove. Natural gas was piped-in for heating in November. That first year a porch was added for \$35. with an electric light.

Basement extended.

The church must have been instantly successful, because by May '13, the Rector was calling for more space. He noted that the C of E were going to be alone in EP until next year, when St Marks was scheduled to open and "we need to hold what we have"

in **May 1914**, a special vestry meeting called for tenders for a Westerly extension to the basement. An additional 1/3 of the anticipated final basement structure, or four more bays, was added, in summer 1914 at a cost of \$6080 and completed by September. The builder was WH Cawston. It was heated by Natural Gas stoves. The walls were encased in brick and a tar and gravel roof added, during the next two years.

The early leadership showed great *wisdom* in doing the building project in small steps, because in 1914, the First World War, began and the economy went into recession. The war lasted until 1918 and Christ Church would remain a basement church until **1921**.

Grounds.

Mention was made in the vestry minutes of clearing and levelling the grounds cleared. The building had been constructed at the lower end of a hill, and the lot itself would have had a gentle slope. The ground would have been covered by original prairie grass with small bushes. The hillside had been excavated and graded, to make way for 34<sup>th</sup> Ave and 8<sup>th</sup>. Some problems arose with water drainage off the hill but 8<sup>th</sup> st would catch much of it. There were no natural trees except down by the Elbow River. Later, in 1921, the church planted trees on the hillside above the church to stabilize the hillside soil.

Administration and office.

Finances.

Weekly offerings.

Parish support had to be addressed right away and the support of the congregation was paramount. There would have been no system of paying regularly, independent of one's attendance, so collections during Sunday services were crucial. Initially a punch or hat would have been passed around but by November 1913, Pledge envelopes were being printed for Thanksgiving and by Dec'13, \$947 had been collected

#### Financing.

With the outbreak of WWI, the economy went into recession. Thus, various mortgages and loans had to be arranged during the first few years, at interest rates around 6%, with personal guarantees by vestry members.

#### Communications and publicity.

#### Fundraising.

It is not always clear if money raising was directed towards the Building Fund or ongoing church operations. The WA were always important to church finances, especially in its early days. They undertook various fund-raising events including \$175 from refreshments by Miss Phillips for a concert in May '12 and sales of handiwork. The Junior WA raised \$50 in December 1914.

Publishers of *Church life* gave some support and carol singing by Miss Sells and three others in Dec '13 also raised money.

#### Fundraising for building fund and ongoing stewardship..

Fund established in Aug '12.

Concert May 27<sup>th</sup> 1913. Refreshments provided.

Oct '13. Envelopes printed for harvest thanksgiving offerings.

Nov '13. 100 duplex pledge envelopes ordered for Jan 1<sup>st</sup>.

Dec '13, WA raised \$175 for building fund.

Envelopes had raised \$947 for church expenses.

#### Outreach.

Jan 1914. \$118 donated towards 'Missions'.

#### Publicity.

In Dec 1913, printed flyers announcing first service were distributed in Glencoe and EP.

By Jan '13 notices were being published in Saturday Heralds.

#### Insurance.

Dec 1912. Insurance on contents for \$1000.

#### Services

Feb '13. In addition to the morning prayer, there was an evening service at 7pm.

Oct 22<sup>nd</sup> '13. Harvest thanksgiving services. Very Rev Dean Paget of Pro-cathedral would preach.

#### Parish notices.

Monthly report by Rector considered in Sept '13 but deferred due to cost.

Parish magazine planned .by Mr Baltram.

#### Music,

By Jan 7<sup>th</sup> 1913, they had purchased an organ from Mason and Rich for \$106.25.

Nov '13. Kneeling rail made for choir boys.

Dec'13. Carolyn Sells first organist and choir master? Died and church helped her sister with medical expenses- \$35 towards Hospital and \$15 towards nurse.

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